



Republican Policy Committee

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THE BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT What Some Senators Said Last Year About the Balanced Budget Amendment

The last time the U.S. Senate voted on a constitutional amendment to balance the budget was March 1, 1994. The amendment was defeated by a vote of 63-37 (Record Vote No. 48), despite the supporting votes of 22 Democrats joining 41 Republicans. Cited below are comments taken from the floor debate surrounding S.J. Res. 41 of 1994, from several Senators who voted in favor of the balanced budget amendment then but are now undecided on H. J. Res. 1.

"In this debate on a balanced budget amendment, we are being forced to face the consequences of our inaction. Quite simply, we are building a legacy of debt for our children and grandchildren and hamstringing our ability to address pressing national priorities...To remedy our fiscal situation, we must stop spending beyond our means. This will not require the emasculation of important domestic priorities, as some suggest."

Senator Thomas Daschle, (D-SD), *Cong. Rec.*, S-1981, February 28, 1994

"This deficit is not about some unusual investment that is going to yield enormous potential rewards. This is a structural operating budget deficit that represents a permanent, continual imbalance between what we raise and what we spend, and the Congress and the American people have conspired together in a way in our political system that prevents us from dealing with it. This constitutional amendment, no matter what one thinks of it, will add to the pressure that we reconcile what we spend with what we raise, and that we begin to assure a better economic future with economic growth and hope and opportunity for our children once again."

Senator Byron Dorgan (D-ND), *Cong. Rec.*, S-2068, March 1, 1994

"If in their heart of hearts they believe we are not going to be able to balance the budget under the current process, then I believe they should support the balanced budget amendment. At least that is the conclusion to which I have come. Without a constitutional amendment, a balanced budget just is not going to be achieved."

Senator Dianne Feinstein, D-CA, *Cong. Rec.*, S-1831, February 24, 1994

"I hear so much about if 40-some-odd Governors can operate a balanced budget, why can't the Federal Government... I operated under it. It worked... I think implementation of this amendment will work. I think we can make it work... I do not understand why it takes a brain surgeon to understand how you operate a budget the way the States do... This is an opportunity to pass a balanced budget amendment that will work and will give us a financially sound future, not only for ourselves but for our children and our grandchildren."

Senator Wendell Ford, D-KY, *Cong. Rec.*, S-2058, March 1, 1994

"I could offer my colleagues 3.5 trillion reasons for a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution; that is the number of deficit dollars added to the national debt since 1981. But I will rest my case with one simple reason: It ought to be a minimal moral obligation of our national government to match its income with its expenditures on an annual basis... so that additional debt is not passed on to future generations."

Senator Ernest Hollings, D-SC, *Cong. Rec.*, S-2075, March 1, 1994

"Congress currently has all the means at our disposal to enact a plan which would bring the Federal budget in balance. What we lack is the willpower to carry out the painful and necessary steps to make this goal a reality. The question is not whether we can do it or not. The question is whether we will. This balanced budget amendment may be the instrument that would finally give us that willpower and also have the American people back those decisions."

Senator Sam Nunn, D-GA, *Cong. Rec.*, S-2109, March 1, 1994

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